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PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD
A UNIVERSAL PRACTICE
IN THE CHURCH.

BY THE

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ON PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

WE know but very little concerning the state of the dead, during that interval which elapses between the departure of the soul, and its re-union with the body preparatory to the final judgment. Yet it is a question that interests us all deeply, for we shall all have to pass through that state, and there are many now in it, whom we have known and loved in life, and whose memory, fondly cherished, still sheds a sweet influence over our souls, so that we cannot bring ourselves to believe that they are altogether lost to us, or we to them.

We used formerly to hold frequent intercourse with them on earth. We were joined to them in a close communion of religious privileges. Their names found a place in our prayers, and we had reason to suppose that we were in like manner remembered by them, in their petitions to the throne of Grace, and at their Eucharists. But now the thought arises—Has Death put a stop to all this? Is that communion in prayer at an end, now that they have entered into a closer union with our common LORD? Is all that we have of them merely a memory of the past, a hope for the future, and perhaps an incentive to follow their example? In short, is the communion of the Saints a name only, and not a reality; a memory, a dream, and not a living fact; a fact which sense indeed fails to recognize, but which is none the less real; a fact based upon our common union with our common LORD, and manifested in a mutual interchange of good offices, as must be the case with every union that is real? On the one hand, if the Departed retain consciousness, and the memory of us, their nearness to CHRIST must impel them to offer up prayer for us, with an earnestness and force that were impossible to them so long as they were here, still clothed with the weakness of sinful humanity; and on the other hand, even if it were more doubtful than it is that they are within the reach of our prayers, that were a very cold, unloving, nay, we may say faithless and un-CHRIST-like spirit which would seize upon

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such a doubt, and turning it into a certainty forbid all such prayers, as being at least of doubtful expediency, as involving a *possible* presumption, an objection that might be made against almost all prayer. Surely to do so is to accuse our LORD of being an "austere man." Better, far nobler, far more trustful is the spirit that dictated the words of Bishop Heber.

"Having been led attentively to consider the question, my own opinion is on the whole favourable to this practice, which indeed is so natural and so comfortable that this alone is a presumption, that it is neither unpleasing to the Almighty, nor unavailing with Him. I have accordingly been myself in the habit for some years of recommending on some occasions—as after receiving the Sacrament, &c.—my lost friends by name to GOD's goodness and compassion through His SON, as what can do them no harm, and *may*, and I hope *will* be of service to them. Only this condition I always endeavour to observe—that I beg His forgiveness at the same time for myself, if unknowingly I am too presumptuous, and His grace lest I who am thus solicitous for *others*, should neglect the appointed means of my own salvation."—(*Diaries of a Lady of Quality.*)

If we are not quite certain concerning the condition of the Departed, that is no reason why we should not pray for them, for we pray for many things concerning which we are not quite certain whether it be GOD's Will to grant our petition or not; but faith is shown by praying, notwithstanding uncertainty. If the prayer is made in a becoming spirit, it is accepted by GOD, and whether it be granted or not draws down a blessing from Him. In all our prayers we are constrained to acknowledge "our ignorance in asking;" all our prayers must be accompanied by a mental reservation, "not my will, but Thine be done." There are various errors concerning the state of the faithful departed, more or less rife at present. There is, first of all, the mediæval doctrine concerning Purgatory. Mistakes, indeed, are often made about it, as though it were a kind of substitute for Hell, and men might live on in a state of sin here, in the hope that they might be purified from those sins in the trial of the intermediate state. But Purgatory is not for the wicked. It does not quench the fires of Hell. It does not enable men to enjoy both worlds, the present and that which is to come; to sin here, and yet through Purgatory arrive at Heaven hereafter. According to the authorized Roman doctrine, the best have lingering remains of sin, venial sins, even up to the day of their death, which have to be purged away before the soul can enjoy the uninterrupted vision of GOD. This is done in the intermediate state, in what is called Purgatory, either by sharp actual

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suffering, or by the anguish caused by the sense of sin, and that consciousness of its black ingratitude which the fuller revelation of GOD'S love inspires, or by a diminution of the comfort of CHRIST'S Presence, and rest in Him. This suffering, therefore, is corrective, and not punitive, and after a longer or shorter duration will root out the remains of sin.

As this doctrine was unknown to the early undivided Church, and Revelation is wholly silent concerning it, it ought not to be required to be believed of necessity for salvation, or imposed upon any one as one of the necessary terms of communion. It certainly seems to satisfy a difficulty that occurs to us, when we consider the faults and failings of good men, that are sometimes even increased as death draws near. We know that not the slightest taint of sin or weakness can be admitted into the Presence of GOD, and that sharp discipline is employed to purge out sin from the heart. How, then, are holy men purged of those venial sins which linger on in them, even to their deaths? What becomes of those whom death-bed repentance reconciles to GOD after a life of sin? What of those, in the main good men, whose lives do not rise above moral and spiritual respectability? The theology of the middle ages provided Purgatory for these classes.

But it is the Blood of CHRIST, and not any act of personal suffering, which really purifies the soul from sin; and *that* may be applied at once, when GOD sees fit, to those who are within His Grace. If any further suffering be needed, it must be remembered that the mere act of dying is a great trial, which may work as a purifier of the soul. The whole subject is involved in mystery, so as not to admit of any dogmatic assertion. One thing is clear, that in Holy Scripture the souls of the righteous are generally spoken of as being in a state of rest and peace. "They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." "They are with CHRIST." There may be in them a progressive development of knowledge, and consequently of love and happiness in that state. That is a different matter. Doubtless there is; but we have no reason to suppose that there is any further suffering after death to those who have died in Grace.

Another popular opinion is that all the faithful departed are already in Heaven, enjoying the fulness of the Beatific Vision. If this be so, prayers for them will certainly be as superfluous as prayers for the holy Angels. But in Holy Scripture it is the coming of our LORD, and not the day of our death, that opens Heaven to us. Thither we shall be taken in body as well as soul, but the bodies of the dead are crumbling into dust, and will not be restored until the general resurrection of the last

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Day. We are told, moreover, that we must all pass through the Judgment of that Day, and how can we suppose that those who are already favoured with the Beatific Vision will be relegated to the judgment bar, even though a triumphant acquittal awaits them there? In some places of Holy Scripture a certain amount of suffering is hinted at in connection with that day. (1 Cor. iii. 13—15.) Doubtless the last sight of their sins, the last memory of their sins will afflict even those on the right hand with one last pang, the last before the eternal joy of their everlasting morning, but how can we suppose even such a pang possible in those who have been in Heaven? The souls of the faithful departed are said to be in Paradise, in Abraham's bosom, in that Hades into which our LORD descended, but not yet in Heaven, as, conversely, the accursed are not yet in the everlasting fire of Hell.

Another opinion is that the souls of the departed are in a state of unconsciousness, or sleep, as if the expressions, "They sleep in JESUS," "He fell asleep," "The saints that slept," were spoken of the soul, and not the body only. If this were so, prayers for the departed would certainly be fruitless, so far as *they* are concerned, except indeed the great prayer for the hastening of the LORD's coming, though such prayers might bring comfort to the survivors, and so would not be without fruit. But is it a fact that the soul is in a state of sleep between death and the Resurrection? The life of the soul consists in a succession of acts of thought, which are never interrupted, from its first creation. In infancy the memory is too weak to retain thought, and in sleep the state of the body impedes the action of the soul, as is shown in the case of dreams. In death the hindrance of the body is removed, so that the result may perhaps be an actual increase of the vigour of the soul's life.

This is hinted at in various places of Holy Scripture. The soul of the penitent thief was taken with CHRIST into Paradise. Surely it was there with Him in a state of conscious life, else what comfort would that promise have brought to him in his sufferings? The rich man in torment knew Lazarus, and remembered his brethren; and in the Revelation we are told of the prayers of those who were slain for the word of GOD, and for the testimony which they held (vi. 9, 10.) The works of the dead that die in the LORD do follow them, that is, they must affect them for good in some way while they are in that state. How can that be if they are not conscious? Are those glorious words of the *Te Deum* mere words and nothing more? The glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs, praise Thee. Nay, rather,

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the spirits and souls of the righteous are in a condition to bless the LORD, to praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

We may conclude, then, that the spirits of the righteous enjoy conscious life, that though they are *not* in a state of suffering they have not yet attained the perfect consummation of their bliss in Heaven. If this be so, they are certainly not beyond the reach of prayer of some kind.

And as a matter of fact the use of such prayers may be traced back to a very remote antiquity. They were in use among the Jews at the latest from the time of the Asmonean princes, and the tradition has been maintained by them down to the present day. The earliest recorded instance of them is that in the Second Book of Maccabees, (ch. xii.) where after the defeat of Gorgias the Jews betook themselves to prayers for those who had fallen in the battle, and Judas made a collection for a sin-offering in their behalf, and so made a reconciliation for the dead that they might be delivered from sin. The present Jewish custom of praying for the dead must have been handed down to them by tradition from that time, as we may be perfectly certain that they did not borrow it from Christians. And this suggests to us an important consideration. As such prayers were in common use, our blessed LORD must often have witnessed them, nay, further, have taken part in them, for He constantly attended the public services of the Synagogue and the Temple. Yet not one word of reproof or remonstrance against them ever fell from His lips; not one single protest of His against them has ever been recorded. Every Pharisaic corruption of religion drew forth His most severe censure, and we cannot conceive that He would have kept such silence upon this subject if it had been at all displeasing to GOD, or of dangerous tendency in itself. We have good reason to believe that the Apostles continued this practice, which thus found place in the public devotions of the Church even from the very first.

It must be confessed that the Scriptural authority for such prayers is exceedingly slight, nor is that surprising when we think how very little is told us concerning the public devotions of the Church, and even concerning the administration of the Sacraments. There are for the most part only a few scattered hints here and there, and even they require to be read by the light of early Church history for their interpretation, as the late Professor Blunt of Cambridge has excellently shown. The comparative silence, therefore, of Scripture is no argument against such prayers, any more than it is against the use of sponsors in Baptism, the signing of the Cross, the observance of the LORD'S Day, and other Christian festivals and the like.

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And yet there is one passage which does contain such a prayer, in the Second Epistle to Timothy: "The LORD grant unto Onesiphorus that he may find mercy of the LORD at that Day." It is pretty generally agreed among commentators that Onesiphorus was dead at that time. We have then here a prayer for him from S. Paul, that he may meet with a merciful judgment from GOD at the last Day. Attempts have been made to resolve the Apostle's words into a pious wish, or the expression of a strong desire—but what is a pious wish, when spoken with reference to GOD, but a prayer, and what is a prayer but the expression of a strong desire? The words here are formal enough. They are in their subject matter such as any one might make use of in behalf of a departed friend. Allowing that it is a prayer, there is nothing in it that any one might turn to an evidence for the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, or any other erroneous opinion on the intermediate state. There is simply a prayer that the deceased may meet with a merciful judgment on the last Day.

But this is not the sole evidence of the Apostolic use of prayers for the dead. In every one of the Christian Liturgies they find a place. Go East or West, North or South, take the intellectual Greek, the civilized Roman, the luxurious Asiatic, the barbarous Gaul or Spaniard, and there is no difference. This is not the place to go particularly into the question of the antiquity of these Liturgies; it is enough to state that every closer investigation throws them further back into antiquity. There is every reason to suppose that those of S. James, S. Mark, and the Clementine were in existence, in the main in their present form, in the early part of the third century, and that portions are of much higher date. The parts that they have in common point to some primitive liturgical form, drawn up by the Apostles. That of S. James was perhaps known to S. Paul, and quoted by him in 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Every one of these Liturgies contains a distinct commemoration of and prayer for the departed, and yet in not one of them is the slightest hint of Purgatory to be found. The following quotations from those that may be considered representative, may be of interest to those who may not have them at hand to refer to.

(1.) That of S. James, which represents the early Church of Jerusalem, and may have been drawn up by the Apostle himself according to a form that had been agreed upon before the dispersion of the College.

After the Consecration follows a series of Intercessions, among which occurs the following:

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"Grant them" (the priests and deacons) "blamelessness of life, that they may find mercy and grace with all Thy saints that have been pleasing to Thee from one generation to another, our Ancestors and Fathers, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Teachers, Holy Persons, and every just spirit made perfect in the faith of Thy CHRIST."

And a little later:

"Remember, O LORD, the GOD of the spirits of all flesh, the orthodox whom we have commemorated from righteous Abel unto this day. Give them rest there in the land of the living, in Thy Kingdom, in the delight of Paradise, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our holy Fathers, whence pain, sorrow, and groaning are exiled, where the light of Thy Countenance looks down and always shineth."

(2.) The Liturgy of S. Mark. This represents the Church of Alexandria. "Its general form and arrangement," says Dr. Neale, "may safely be attributed to the Evangelist himself and his immediate followers." In it is found the following prayer:

"Give rest to the souls of our fathers and brethren that have hitherto slept in the faith of CHRIST, remembering our ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, &c., every spirit that has departed in the faith of CHRIST. To the spirits of all these give rest, our Master, LORD, and GOD, in the tabernacles of Thy saints, vouchsafing to them in Thy kingdom the good things of Thy promise, which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard. Give rest to their souls, and vouchsafe to them the kingdom of Heaven."

The Liturgy of Malabar, belonging to a more Eastern family:

"Let us remember our fathers and brethren who have departed out of this world in the orthodox faith. Let us pray, I say, to the LORD, that He may absolve them, and forgive their offences, and vouchsafe that they, with all righteous men who have obeyed the Divine will, may rejoice for ever."

It is needless to extend quotations further. Every known Liturgy has its distinct commemoration of and prayer for the dead, and yet not one of them breathes a hint of their being in a state of pain or misery, or a prey to a purgatorial fire, much less is there anything that can be twisted into a prayer for the lost, or the souls in Hell. The faithful departed, who *are* in rest and peace, are the objects of the Church's prayer.

But we have other and more unimpeachable evidence of the early date of prayers for the dead, and commemorations of them at the Holy Eucharist. The date of these Liturgies may be questioned, we may think unreasonably, but still there is the possibility; but we have also the witness of the early Fathers for the practice. Numberless quotations might be made from

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the Post-Nicene Fathers in their favour, and it must be remembered that to them also, to those who lived during the age of the Œcumenical Councils, the Church of England refers as guides to her teachers, but it may be as well to confine ourselves to the Ante-Nicenes, so as to show that prayers for the dead held a recognized place in the public devotions of the Church at a very early date.

S. Cyprian bears witness to the general practice in his epistle concerning Geminius Victor, who at his death had, contrary to the canons, appointed a Presbyter to be executor of his will, an office which by Roman law could not be declined. For this it was decreed, that "no offering should be made for him, nor sacrifice celebrated for his repose." (Ep. lxvii. Ed. Baluz.)

It was the custom, as appears from the same writer, to offer for the martyrs, on the anniversaries of their martyrdom, oblations and sacrifices of commemoration, and for ordinary Christians solemn supplications and prayers, and that without any idea of their being in a state of pain or misery.

Origen: "They thought it convenient and fit to make mention of the saints in their prayers, and to excite themselves by the remembrance of them." (*Bingham, Antiqu.* xv. 3, 5.)

Tertullian a little earlier speaks of the same practice in his exhortation to single marriage. He mentions the first wife as being already received into the LORD'S Presence, "for whose spirit you make request: for whom you render annual oblations." (*Exhort. ad Cast.* xi.)

So concerning a widow: "She prays for his" (her husband's) "soul, and requests refreshment for him meanwhile, and fellowship with him in the first Resurrection, and she offers the sacrifice on the anniversaries of his falling asleep." (*De Monogam.* x.)

S. Irenæus does not indeed directly mention such prayers, his subject not requiring it, but he speaks of the intermediate state as a state of expectation, wherein the bliss of the departed *is not yet consummated.* "The souls of CHRIST'S disciples shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by GOD, and there remain until the Resurrection, awaiting that event, then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is, bodily, just as the LORD rose, they shall come thus into the Presence of GOD. (*Advers. Heres.* v. 31, 32.)

In the Apostolical Constitutions an actual form of prayer is given: "Let the Bishop say,—O Thou who art by nature immortal, and hast no end of Thy being, from whom every creature, both mortal and immortal, is derived, do Thou look upon this Thy servant, whom Thou hast selected and removed into another state; and forgive him if voluntarily or involuntarily he

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has sinned, and afford him merciful angels, and place him in the bosom of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and of all those who have pleased Thee from the beginning of the world, where there is no grief, sorrow, or lamentation, but the peaceable region of the godly, and the undisturbed land of the upright, and of those that therein see the glory of Thy CHRIST, by whom glory, &c." (*Apos. Cons.* viii. 41.)

It is further appointed that alms should be given to the poor for a memorial of the deceased, but a caution is added: "These things we say concerning the pious, for as to the ungodly, if thou givest all the world to the poor thou wilt not benefit him at all." So we see that prayers were not offered by the Church for the souls in Gehenna.

The date of these Constitutions is uncertain. They are not really Apostolic, but most of the books had appeared in their present form before the Nicene Council, and being a compilation of pre-existing usages they represent the feelings, practices, and principles of an earlier age.

The custom, then, may be traced with certainty as far back as the end of the second century, and it was then universally prevalent. But such a practice could not have sprung up suddenly in so many places, or dated from the first time that mention is made of it. It was of unknown antiquity, but as it prevailed everywhere, and formed a settled part in the devotions of the Jews, it can only be attributed to Apostolic authority *in the Church*. It is true that there is no mention of it in the earlier Fathers, as S. Justin Martyr, S. Irenæus, or the Apostolics, but we must remember how very few and short are the writings of the latter that have come down to us, so few that it would be absurd to look for the whole of Christian doctrine and practice in them; and so far as regards SS. Justin and Irenæus their *silence* proves nothing. It did not enter into their plan to speak at length of their devotions. In fact many of their writings were addressed to Jews, heretics, and heathen, and in dealing with such those early writers exercised a well-known reserve with respect to all matters that concerned the inner life of the Church.

It remains to be seen what is the teaching and practice of our own branch of the Church on this subject. Is that a fact which has been rashly asserted of her, that she does not sanction prayers for the dead?

The Church of England makes it her proud boast that her continuity was not broken off at the Reformation. Certain corruptions were removed, but the theory was that everything ancient in the past, everything primitive and Catholic should be

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retained. She makes her appeal to the primitive undivided Church, in her directions to preachers to the Church of at least the first four Œcumenical Councils, a period when these prayers were the universal practice. That she had no wish to break unnecessarily with the past, or with the Continental Churches as at present existing, she herself authoritatively declares in the thirtieth canon of 1603:

"The abuse of a thing doth not take away the lawful use of it. Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any other such like Churches in all things which they held and practised, that as the apology of the Church of England confesseth, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of GOD, nor offend the minds of sober men; and only departeth from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the *Apostolic Churches which were their first founders.*"

What then are the principles and the practices of the Church of England here?

Before the Reformation such prayers found place in her Ritual, both in the Holy Eucharist, and in the Burial Office. In the first the Sarum Missal was as follows, after the consecration:

"Remember also, O LORD, the souls of Thy servants and of Thine handmaidens, N. and N., who have gone before us in the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace: to them, O LORD, and to all who rest in CHRIST, we pray Thee grant a place of refreshment, of light, and of peace, through," &c.

The First Prayer Book of 1549 may be looked upon as the authoritative voice of the Reformed Church of England. It was carefully drawn up by English divines upon the basis of the existing formularies. It was submitted to and approved by the Convocations of both Provinces, and finally ratified by Parliament, that declared it to be the "work of the HOLY GHOST." In this book Prayers for the Dead were retained. Nor was this merely an oversight, for they had already been excepted against, as we know from Latimer's sermon, preached before Convocation, on June 9, 1536. In the Liturgy the following prayer is found just before the Consecration:

"We commend unto Thy mercy, O LORD, all other Thy servants, which are departed here from us with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace. Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace; and that at the day of Thy general Resurrection we and all they, which

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be of the mystical Body of Thy SON, may be altogether set on Thy right hand, and hear that His most joyful voice, Come unto Me, &c."

This is not the place to narrate the steps through which this work was overthrown, and the Second Prayer Book of Edward substituted for it. The change was brought about against the wishes of the English Bishops, by the influence of the foreign Reformers working upon the self-will of the young King; but in the preamble of the Act of Parliament that accepted it, it was expressly declared that there was nothing in the former book contrary to GOD'S Word, and that the alterations proceeded from curiosity, rather than any worthy cause. The Book has since been abolished, and has no further authority over us, whereas the first may be considered the genuine work of the Reformers, and may be appealed to by us, where our present book is silent or doubtful.

In the Second Book Prayers for the dead were omitted, nor was any mention made of them in the Eucharist. The Prayer for the Church Militant ended with the intercession for the sick and afflicted; the commemoration of the departed as we now have it was subjoined in 1662.

What then is our present position with regard to such prayers? The Church of England has never breathed a syllable of condemnation of them in her Articles, her authorised formularies or canons ecclesiastical. On the contrary when the question was raised some years ago, in the case of Breeks *v.* Woolfrey, it was decided by Sir H. Jenner, the Judge of the Ecclesiastical Court, that they were in no way forbidden by the Church, that they had been constantly recognised by our holiest divines since the Reformation.

In our authorised formularies there is still a recognition, faint indeed, but still a recognition of such Prayers. At the end of the prayer for the Church Militant, we pray that *we with those that are departed* in the faith may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom. In the same Office after the Communion we plead the merits of the Sacrifice in behalf of the *whole* Church, not only that branch of it which is on earth, "that we and all Thy whole Church may have remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion." And in the Burial Service, besides the fact that Prayer does find a place therein, we have a more distinct Prayer for the departed, "that we *with* all those that have departed in the faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in Thy eternal and glorious kingdom." *We* and *they*, the dead and the living are here combined.

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It must be confessed that these utterances are very faint, but still they are enough to disprove the assertion that the Church of England does not sanction prayers for the dead. And this position derives greater strength when we remember that the more definite prayers were cut out only by the influence of foreign Calvinists, acting upon a self-willed boy-king, and a traitorous Archbishop, and not by the free voice of the Church.

To this must be added a consensus of some of the very best of our divines in their favour.

I. Bishop Overall, the author of the concluding portion of the Church Catechism :—

"The Puritans think that here (in the Burial Service) is a prayer for the dead, allowed and practised by the Church of England, and so think I; but we are not both in one mind for censuring the Church for so doing. They say it is popish and superstitious; I, for my part, esteem it pious and Christian. The body lies dead in the grave, but by CHRIST'S power and GOD'S goodness shall men be raised up again; and the benefit is so great that sure it is worth the praying for; because then we may pray for what we ourselves or our deceased brethren as yet have not, therefore doth the Church pray for the *perfect consummation of bliss both in soul and body* to be given to our brethren departed. Prayers for the dead cannot be denied but to have been universally used of all Christians in the ancientest and purest state of the Church, and by the Greek Fathers who never admitted any purgatory. What though their souls be in bliss already, they may have a greater degree of bliss by our prayers. And when their bodies come to be raised and joined to their souls again, they shall be sure of a better state. Our prayers for them will not be in vain, were it but for that alone."—(*Wheatley on the Common Prayer*, xii. 4, 2.) These words have been referred to Bishop Cosin; their authorship is doubtful.

II. There is a general prayer at the end of Bishop Andrewes' funeral sermon, preached by the Bishop of Ely :—

"And so I end, beseeching GOD to give to us all, as He gave to him, our parts in the first Resurrection from sin to grace; and to grant to him and to all the faithful saints departed, and us all with him, a joyful resurrection to everlasting life and glory in JESUS CHRIST."

III. Bishop Jeremy Taylor :—

"Upon what accounts the Fathers did pray for saints departed, and indeed generally for all, it is not now seasonable to discourse; but to say this only that such general prayers for the dead as those above reckoned, the Church of England did never condemn by any express article, but left it in the middle;

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but expressly condemns the doctrine of purgatory, and consequently *all prayers for the dead relating to it.*" (*Dissuasive from Popery*, P. I. ch. 1, s. 4.)

IV. Bishop Cosin in his Notes on the Book of Common Prayer, sees prayers for the dead in the Communion and Burial Offices. His words on the Burial Service are as follow:—

"That we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission: where by all the whole Church is to be understood as well those that have been *heretofore*, and those that shall be hereafter, as those that are now the present members of it. (And hereupon, my Lord of Winchester, Bishop Andrewes, grounded his answer to Cardinal Perron, when he said, 'We have and offer this sacrifice both for the living and for the dead, as well for those that are absent as for those that be present,' or words to this purpose.) So that the virtue of this sacrifice doth not only extend itself to the living and those that are present, but likewise to them that are absent, and them that be already departed." (*Notes on the Book of Common Prayer*, series ii. p. 351; compare *Notes on the Burial Service*, p. 373, 375.)

V. Thorndike. (*Just Weights*, ch. xvi.):—

"What hinders the dead to receive comfort and refreshment from GOD, rest and peace, and light by the visitation of GOD, by the consolation of His Spirit, by His good Angels to sustain them in expectation of their trial? The Church has always assisted them with the prayers of the living both for their speedy trial, and for their easy absolution and discharge with glory before GOD, together with the accomplishment of their happiness in the receiving of their bodies."

To these may be added in the last century, Wheatley "on the Book of Common Prayer." There must also be taken into account, the well-known practice of Dr. Johnson among laymen and the saintly Bishop Heber, and who knows how many others may not have been in the habit like them of commending their departed friends to GOD? It is not a subject upon which men speak openly, that rule of private devotion; but it is known that many dutiful sons of the Church, both in our own and preceding ages, have been used to offer up such prayers, and it would be the extreme of harshness to discourage the warmth of affection and the energy of faith that dictate these prayers, even if there were less authority for them than actually holds. It cannot be too often repeated, that there is *no necessary connection* between Prayers for the dead and the Roman Doctrine of Purgatory. The early Church knew nothing of purgatory, and yet offered up prayers and eucharists for the

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faithful departed; and it is to that early and undivided Church that we of the Church of England make our appeal in present controversy with Protestants and Ultramontanes. The Eastern Church to this day rejects purgatory, and yet offers up the like prayers. Every one of the English divines who have advocated such prayers, has also written or preached against purgatory; and, conversely, others who might be quoted as against the prayers, are shown by the context to be really attacking not the ancient use of such prayers, but modern prayers for souls in purgatory. We believe that the faithful departed are in rest and peace with CHRIST, but that their bliss is not yet fully consummated, nor will it be until after the general Resurrection and final Judgment, when they will be admitted body and soul into the Highest Heaven to the Beatific Vision. Meanwhile we pray for them—

1. That they may have increase in happiness and knowledge of GOD, and the sense of His presence, it being admitted that they have not yet received the fulness of either. (Heb. xi. 40, last clause.)

2. That they may have a merciful judgment at the last day, (2 Tim. i. 18,) as we shall all have to undergo a judgment of some kind. (2 Cor. v. 10.)

3. That the coming of the LORD may be hastened, and the time of their own waiting cut short. (S. Matth. vi. 10; Rev. vii. 10; cf. S. Matth. xxiv. 22; Rev. xxii. 20.)

And thus we ourselves obtain a corresponding benefit, for our sense of the Communion of Saints is quickened; our memory and love of them are kept alive; we realise more fully the truth that death is only a change in our state, not an end of our existence, or a break in our conscious life; we estimate more highly the importance in the dispensation of salvation of our LORD'S second coming; and lastly, but not least, we are ourselves confirmed in the habit of intercessory prayer, that purest and most unselfish form of prayer.

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